

News from U.S. Rep. John Spratt (D-SC)

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Spratt Statement on the War with Iraq

WASHINGTON – U.S. Rep. John Spratt (D-SC) issued the following statement today on the war with Iraq.

"Ever since the possibility of military action against Iraq was raised last summer, I have held that war should be our last resort. I had hoped that 'beefed up' inspections, backed by force, might ferret out Saddam Hussein's unconventional weapons, and I supported a new round of inspections, under the auspices of the Security Council, as our first resort.

"I was encouraged when President Bush went to the United Nations Security Council last fall, and I viewed the unanimous approval of Security Council Resolution 1441 as a diplomatic triumph. But our efforts to implement Resolution 1441 came up short, and the new round of inspections was less successful than I had expected.

"I had hoped the threat of force might avert the need for force; and in a way, I believe that it did. The deployment of U.S. and British troops to the Persian Gulf probably prompted Iraq to destroy more than 60 of its medium-range Al Samoud 2 missiles. But even opponents of military action doubt that Saddam has complied with Resolution 1441 in good faith, much less earlier demands for disarmament.

"This is a grave time for the United States. War always brings uncertainty, and the aftermath of this war will be filled with risks, as well. But I have the utmost confidence in our military and our men and women in uniform, and I know they will prevail.

"I pray that war will be short and successful, with minimal casualties. This is a time when all Americans should close ranks, follow the flag and hope for the best.

"I represent hundreds of men and women in the National Guard and Reserves who have been deployed. I also represent several thousand men and women stationed at Shaw Air Force Base, near Sumter, South Carolina. The headquarters of 9th Air Force is based at Shaw, and 9th Air Force is known as CENTAF, the air component of Central Command.

"Their dedication to the defense of America, their willingness to go in harm's way, their ability, and their bravery call for our highest praise and deepest appreciation. To all of them, wherever they are serving, I say 'thank you' on behalf of a grateful nation. I pray that this war will be short and successful; that casualties will be minimal on all sides; and that our troops will be home safely and soon."

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